Nation

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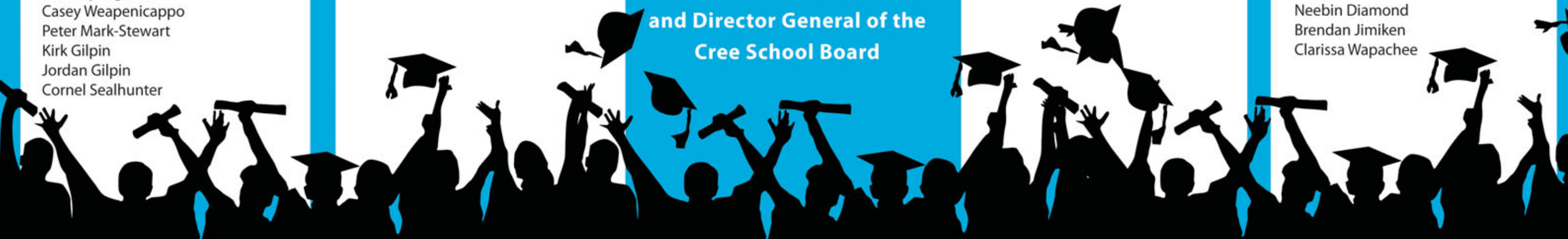
from the Chairperson, Council of Commissioners and Director General of the Cree School Board



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Financial transparency

by Will Nicholls

Relations between First Nations and the federal government aren't what they used to be. First Nations leaders across Canada are frustrated with not being consulted on legislation before Parliament. In this case, it's Bill C-27: First Nations Financial Transparency Act and many leaders feel it's heavy-handed and gives the wrong impression of First Nations. AFN BC Regional Chief Jody Wilson-Raybould said, "They suggest that First Nation governments are corrupt, our leaders are not transparent and consequently need to be regulated by Ottawa."

Aboriginal Affairs Minister John Duncan said they are forcing a vote on the financial transparency bill that will require First Nations chiefs and councillors to publish their salaries and expenses. The act before Parliament gained momentum as a result of research from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation that alleged more than 50 band politicians earn more than the prime minister and more than 160 are better paid than a premier.

In looking at the Canadian Taxpayers Federation's figures one quickly sees that travel and per diems are added to the overall totals. Given the high costs of travelling from remote northern communities, it is not surprising the final totals are high. Added to this is that the federation looks at the taxable equivalent of the final figures meaning the numbers are again inflated to reflect what First Nations leaders would have to earn if they were taxed. So, if they made, for example, $10 a year the inflated figure might be $13.35 or more depending on how it was calculated.

All that aside, the Cree communities can at any time see the salary of their leaders. They even have a say in starting salary and any raises. The Nation, in the past, printed the salaries of the Grand Chiefs, chiefs and other leaders. No leader had a problem with disclosing the information. Transparency is something we can all believe in. Residents in the American colonies revolted because of taxation without representation and that is the case here. Without input and consultation by Canada's First Nations, the law will be fundamentally flawed and thus draconian. It shows the steps taken and promised for First Nations to achieve greater autonomy and self-governance were nothing more than empty rhetoric in the end. A lack of consent and true consultation not only signals a lack of respect for Aboriginal self-governance, but ensures a continuation of the paternalist and colonialist attitudes that have tainted federal and First Nations relationships.

In many ways the whole issue is a red herring. Checks and balances already exist and access to the information on salaries is usually available to band members willing to dig for it through Band financial statements, public meetings or Aboriginal Affairs data.

This bill, though, does take the spotlight off other issues that should be transparent and subject to accountability, such as the missing and murdered women, education, justice, lack of housing, safe drinking water, poverty, changes to the Nutrition North Program and a host of other First Nations concerns.

I agree with transparency and accountability, but it should apply to much more than a flawed act that will ultimately hinder than help First Nations.

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Husky puppies play after a snowfall at the Sheshamush camp.

photo by:
Louise Abbott/COTA
This image appears in
Eeyou Istchee: Land of the Cree
www.creetourism.ca

IT cold turkey

by Sonny Orr

Recently, the weather has been acting up and in some cases, the weather was so bad it cut out the power in certain regions and communities. Power outages seem to be the new social enemy as many people depend on the merits of electricity. But where does it come from, a second grader might ask an unknowing parent. How do you explain where electricity comes from, when trying to explain using "the birds and the bees" language just doesn't seem to cut the cake.

Let's see now, first, there was one of the founders of the USA running around in a violent thunderstorm with a kite attached to a key, just to prove that metal conducts electricity. Then, the next thing you know, your wood stove is replaced and indoor plumbing with indoor lights become the latest rage.

Then some dude named Nikola Tesla showed up and did amazing things with the forces of nature, even creating the world's first million-watt transmitter, which could send radio signals clear around the world. In fact, the man was literally crackling with lightning bolts shooting out from gigantic glass orbs and huge transformer-type equipment, much like the stuff that brought Dr. Frankenstein's monster back to life. His genius, suddenly recognized by the powers at hand, went on to build huge generating stations, most notably, the one at Niagara Falls. The next thing you know, AC Delco is formed and then, dams go up everywhere in the USA, blocking off majestic rivers. Then before you know it, everyone's doing it, damming this and damning that.

After going through an amazing change in our lives as Eeyou, from living off the land and then moving into the living room in a few generations and within the lifespan of your average Baby Boomer, we cannot live without the magic switch it seems. I go to work and the lights dimmed then surge brightly, before settling down. Suddenly, the power is off and using only the cellphone glow to get around, I'm back in a life without electricity.

With nowhere to go but home, we discover that cuddling together generates heat and energy. The big pot of tea is still hot and then the chill sets in. No Facebook or Internet, no telephone (back in the day, before electric telephones, the phone would still ring, no matter what), no television and no electric stove. For awhile, we worry about the refrigerator and freezer, but soon forget about it since the microwave doesn't work anyway. By habit, light switches are turned on and off... more blankets are called for and heat from the candles are welcomed.

For my generation, electricity wasn't always around and we witnessed the rapid transition from fire to electricity to wireless Internet. And with each new invention that changed our lives, the more we came to rely on electricity for getting around and for basic survival. Soon, we will die without electricity, unless the old ways aren't retained. Got a wood stove in the basement, no problem. Got a propane stove to cook our food outdoors, no problem. But, then the electric generator starts up and the television and satellite system are back on and the Simpsons tell us not to worry.

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Cracking down

Cree police step up their war on drugs and alcohol in Eeyou Istchee

By Akiva Levitas

The Eeyou Eenou Police Force (EEPF) has upped the ante in its crackdown on drugs and alcohol in Eeyou Istchee. In the past few months, the number of busts of suppliers in the region has dramatically increased.

Police Director Reggie Bobbish reported on November 6 the successful execution of a series of warrants issued during the past few months. Bobbish reaffirmed the EEPF's commitment to the welfare and safety of the Cree Nation. Stopping drug and alcohol traffickers is the first step in ridding the Cree community of illegal substance abuse.

> "DRUG AND ALCOHOL ADDICTION IS A VERY SERIOUS PROBLEM AND THOSE THAT SUPPLY THESE VICES MUST BE STOPPED."

The most recent bust occurred on Nov. 1, when the EEPF followed through with two search warrants by conducting an early morning raid in Wemindji. The raid netted them five suspects and 137 grams of cocaine with a street value of $20,000.

Prior to that, on Oct. 24, the EEPF arrested six people who were suspected of drugs trafficking in Whapmagoostui in another multi-pronged early morning bust. During the raid they managed to seize a substantial amount of illegal substances as well as firearms from four locations.

Earlier in October, the EEPF conducted two busts in Chisasibi. On Oct. 12, there was a warrant involving the illegal sale and distribution of alcohol as well as other offences. In these raids, officers seized one five-litre keg, 20 cans of beer and nine bottles of liquor.

On Oct. 8, they busted an individual for suspected drug trafficking at his residence, and seized around 20 grams of marijuana and drug paraphernalia. Earlier in July, the police force had made a bust in Chisasibi, where they caught a female suspect who had 28 grams of marijuana for the purpose of selling it.

Marijuana

In late September, the EEPF executed two search warrants in Eastmain. From the bust, they netted three suspected traffickers, 56 grams of marijuana with a street value of over $2,000, and a small amount of cocaine. An additional 13 firearms were seized from the residences due to them not being properly stored.

The names of the individuals who have been arrested during these operations will only be available after they have been sentenced in court.

The EEPF is proud of these successes in busting drug traffickers in the past six months. The EEPF has stated that its commitment to the safety of the Cree Nation is stronger than ever and these busts are a result of the hard work of the EEPF.

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Télébec
A DIVISION OF BELL ALIANT

courtesy of Peter Papyarluk

Destroyed by flames

Whapmagoostui's Youth Centre burns down

by Akiva Levitas

It was a Remembrance Day to remember this year in Whapmagoostui when the Youth Centre went up in flames. The centre served the community for 10 years. It was where holidays, church services, gatherings, weddings, concerts and other events took place.

"I know for a fact that this building will never be replaced. It is a tragic loss for all," said Whapmagoostui Chief Stanley George in a message to the community. "Former Chief Matthew Mukash, former Youth Chief of Whapmagoostui Pakesso Mukash and all parties involved in the realization of the Youth Centre – your work will never be forgotten as this was a truly remarkable place."

But through all that the sadness of this loss there is still a hope for the future. "Within a week in a forest fire, new willows, flowers and trees already start to grow and blossom. This is the vision and optimism we must pursue," he said.

The building cost $1.7 million to construct in 2002.The insurance assessment of the site ended on November 20 with an estimated $4 million in damage. The site, that was sealed up and untouched until after the investigation, will now see the cleanup work start.

After the fire, everything the youth had in the centre was turned to ashes – the pool tables and the sound equipment that brought so much enjoyment were gone. At the time of the blaze, the Whapmagoostui band office had been temporarily using the building while their offices were being renovated. All of their office equipment went up in flames from furniture and computers to a brand-new server. The fire also cut the lines to the band offices for a short period.

The first alarm went off in the building at 8:30 pm, but when the fire department arrived they didn't detect any signs of fire or smoke. When the alarm went off for the second time at 11 pm, they discovered smoke on the second floor. By the time backup arrived, the fire had spread throughout the second floor.

"Foul play isn't suspected," said interim Fire Chief Josie George who was given a report of a witness seeing a blue-green flash occur by the power lines in the vicinity of the youth centre shortly before the fire.

In fact, Hydro-Québec had tried to service the visible sparks on the transmission lines and had given assurances to the local fire department that everything was okay. The Whapmagoostui maintenance department went to inspect the boiler room at around 9 pm, with everything being reported as normal.

Around 18 firefighters from the twin communities of Whapmagoostui and Kuujjuaraapik battled the blaze as it raged on. After three hours, the fire was deemed uncontainable. The community could only helplessly stand and watch as the flames consumed the centre. Strong winds fanned the flames further increasing the intensity of the blaze.

"The most important thing was that no one got hurt," said Josie George. "It was important to get the youth away from the building before anything bad happened. Thankfully, none of the firemen were hurt putting out the fire."

An order had been issued to close the building to the public as soon as the reports of the flash came in and before the fire broke out.

According to a member of the fire crew, they could see that the fire was started between the wall of the mechanical room and the janitor's room. It is suspected that faulty wiring is to blame, although it won't be confirmed until after the investigation. The structure of the centre was around 90% wood and as sprinkler systems were not mandatory in 2002, the building had none.

"This is a lesson we will all learn from so that is doesn't happen again – we need to make our buildings safer," Stanley George said. "Rest in peace to the great building we once called the Youth Centre. To all the youth, only greater opportunities will arise."

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Stornoway Diamond signs agreement involving Route 167 extension

Stornoway Diamonds entered into a new agreement with the Quebec government that puts the responsibility for the Route 167 extension under Stornoway's direct management.

This new agreement replaces two previous ones between Quebec and Stornoway.

The Route 167 extension is necessary for the construction of Stornoway's Renard Diamond Project. The road will eventually allow Stornoway to transport crews and equipment, which will begin mine construction.

Work on this 240-kilometre extension began in February and is planned in four segments. As stated in earlier agreements, the first two segments comprised of 143 kilometres will be completed by Quebec.

Under the terms of the new agreement the process of building is expedited by giving Stornoway the responsibility for the construction of the third and fourth segments. Stornoway plans to begin construction in April 2013.

Quebec's ministry of transport has agreed to complete a winter road by March 2013 expediting Stornoway's construction plans.

The cost of Stornoway's half of the road is estimated to be $77 million including construction and road maintenance. The Quebec government will provide a loan to cover this expense and repayment will begin with the start of mining operations.

Stornoway President and CEO Matt Manson was happy with the terms of the agreement stating, "With Stornoway now responsible for the completion of the project's access road, we will be in full control of our overall development schedule for the first time."

Grand Chief Coon Come and Premier Marois meet for first time

Ties between the new Quebec government and the James Bay Cree were solidified during a meeting between Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come and Premier Pauline Marois on November 19. This was the first such meeting since the Parti Québécois was voted into power on September 4.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the new Agreement of Governance signed by the James Bay Cree and the Quebec governmet last July. This agreement gives the Cree more rights over Category II and III lands in the James Bay region.

Both politicians reiterated their support for implementation of the new agreement.

Courtesy CBC Cree Radio

Pauline Marois and Matthew Coon Come

Coon Come had kind words for Marios stating, "I have known Premier Marois for many years. I know she is a friend of the Crees of Eeyou Istchee." He also stated his support for the appointment of Martine Tremblay to the position of Quebec's senior negotiator for the implementation of the Paix des Braves and Agreement on Governance.

Tremblay will be responsible for implementing Jean Charest's Plan Nord to develop the natural resources of northern Quebec. Although the Liberal government was voted out of power, the PQ has promised to continue with the Plan Nord.

The politicians also discussed a potential moratorium on uranium mining in the James Bay region.

Coon Come stated his support for a moratorium while Marois stated that her government will announce its official position in the upcoming weeks.

Comic strip courtesy of Tundra Comics: www.tundracomics.com

Making a list & checking it twice...

The *Nation's* Christmas list for the naughty and nice

By Amy German

As the snows of Eeyou Istchee settle in for the season, children far and wide begin to dream of that incredible big morning after Santa visits… and we adults have to start planning out just what and where we will get all of that bounty that goes under our trees.

Yes, Christmas time with all of its wonder also means hunkering down for some serious online shopping or big trips away from the communities to shop until you drop.

But, if you are looking to get the most out of your shopping excursion as your time may be limited or you are looking for that incredible online find, sometimes it's better to consult with the experts and we have done just that.

This year, I tracked down the jolly old elf himself to see just what seems to be hot on his list and what he suggests for your favourite hunter, foodie, techie, fashionista, athlete, generous soul, little kid or big kid. Even if your loved ones or workmates don't fall under one of these categories, Santa certainly will have some scintillating ideas for you so read on to see his suggestions for 2012….

Tech wonders from the great red sack

"My elves make the finest gifts, but when the demand is too great, sometimes I will order a few gifts from ThinkGeek as nobody does gifts to please a smarty-pants like they do," said Santa.

From their website Santa recommended the Star Theater Pro Home Planetarium for those who want to enjoy the beauty of the night sky from the comfort of their bedroom on a cold winter's night.

This indoor planetarium set is like having a planetarium right in your own home and is ideal to teach the kids about space or just chill out to. The set includes: two interchangeable hi-res image discs (Starfield and Earth/Moon/Sun discs), optical-quality lens system with adjustable focus, ultra-bright white LED light source and numerous other features. It goes for $169.99 US.

For more info:
www.thinkgeek.com/product/c057

Also from ThinkGeek, for those days when you want to go out in the bush but want to ensure that all of your gadgetry remains charged, this incredible Piggyback Solar Powered Gadgetbag is a hip and cool way to strap a solar panel to

Star Theater Pro Home Planetarium

your back so that you can enjoy the great outdoors while charging up for later.

This awesome backpack turns full sun into 1000mA at 5.6 volts so it can charge an iPhone with ease. Its 800mAh Lithium Ion battery pack soaks up the excess for those cloudy days and it includes special gadget-sized pouches as well as built-in channels for running USB cables between pouches. Goes for $119.99 US.

For more info: www.thinkgeek.com/product/ea2d

ThinkGeek is also the ultimate site to find geeky delights like inflatable Star Trek captain's chairs, rabbit robots, circuit board cufflinks, Star Wars-themed holiday gear and just about everything else Star Wars (think Yoda lights for your Christmas tree and Boba Fett bathrobes), Assassin's Creed III Tomahawk replicas and so much more to please anyone's nerdy pleasure.

For more info: www.thinkgeek.com

The iPad mini

Over at the Apple Store, the latest hot ticket item is the iPad mini. Featuring everything loveable about the iPad in a smaller package and a smaller price, this tablet features a beautiful 7.9-inch display and the full high-speed iPad experience. Starting at $329 for a 16 GB model, now you can even personalize the iPad with free engravings when you order it online. For more info: www.store.apple.com/ca

One of this year's biggest ticket items is the Samsung Smart TV that can do just about everything. These fancy-shmancy high-tech super TVs allow you surf the web on an optimized web browser that supports the latest flash and HTML decoding, so it's just like browsing on your PC. You can also have the ultimate social experience with Samsung's Social TV, a split-screen feature that allows you to share your commentary with friends and family through services like Facebook, Twitter and Google Talk, all while simultaneously watching live TV. Plus, you can make Skype-to-Skype voice and video calls from the big screen with an optional Skype camera. Available at Best Buy, these incredible Smart TVs start at around $500 for the smaller versions and go right up to $1500 for a 55" deluxe model.

For more info: www.bestbuy.ca

For the budding DJ, or just someone who can't get enough pristine sound when it comes to their music listening experience, Beats by Dr. Dre headphones are the top of the line and one of the sweetest finds! Future Shop is the destination for Beats products and features a wide selection including the top-rated Solo HD iPod-iPhone Control Headphones with Built-in Mic in red. These headphones are equipped with the same technology found in Beats Studio phones and so the Solo Beats deliver incredible high fidelity sound in an ultra-light over-ear design.

For more info: www.futureshop.ca/en-CA/category/beats-headphones/beats-headphones.aspx

For tech fans who are looking to improve their vocabulary or the students who are looking to beef up a paper with improved diction, there is nothing like the Speaking Merriam-Webster's School Dictionary to answer any essential vocabulary inquiry. Written especially for students Grades 9-11 or ages 14-17 (though it is great for anyone), this product can help advance one's learning to new levels by pronouncing hundreds of thousands of words and definitions. It also features access to 500,000 synonyms and antonyms from the expansive Franklin Thesaurus. Running at $89.99, this product is available exclusively online from www.thesource.ca/

A little bit of fashion glamour

When it comes to glamorous gals and the forever fashionable, Santa has all sorts of special shopping stops to fill his sleigh with fabulousness!

"According to our fashionista elves, this is all about glitter, glamour and delivering that 'oh wow' moment on Christmas morning so think about what makes your gal's heart sing," said Santa.

Faux-fur "capelet"

For those that want to deliver glamour on a budget, there are plenty of places that have something incredible and cool that won't eat up all of your holiday shopping allowance.

For the young mademoiselle, stores like Ardene offer all sorts of fun items on a budget like this sweet little hot-pink hard case "Romantic Clutch," for only $18.50. www.ardene.com/en/accessories/handbags/patent-pu-clutch.html

To pretty her pucker, any gal, young or more mature, would appreciate the Anastasia Kisses On My List Volume 2 Hydrafull Gloss Set from Sephora cosmetics. This limited-edition HydraFull Gloss set includes three sheer, ultra-hydrating glosses and three new and exclusive hypercolour glosses that make for one incredible set of lip colour options to suit any occasion. Once more,

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this economical gift set retails for $30, but features $108 in value.

For more info: www.sephora.com/kisses-on-my-list-volume-2-hydrafull-gloss-set-P375790

Help her fancy up her outerwear this season with this fabulous faux-fur "capelet" (like a cape and a shawl simultaneously) from Joe Fresh stores for only $39.99 and is snuggly warm while also being incredibly cool!

For more info: www.joefresh.com/en/product/faux-fur-capelet.

For an additional $16, you can team up the capelet with some matching faux-fur-trimmed gloves for an outdoor look that is both smart and sassy.

For more info: www.joefresh.com/en/product/knit-gloves-1

Something else fun to start a young gal out on is a charm bracelet that can be added on to for years to come like the Pandora bracelets.

Starting as low as $5 for leather or silver starter bracelets, Pandora is all about collecting charms to reflect the individual and with hundreds of charms and styles to choose from this is a fabulous way to showcase one's personality! In gold or silver, pavet or murano glass, wood or enamel, this spectacular bracelet and charm set can start a lifetime of collecting and storytelling.

For more info: www.pandora.net

Now that they finally have their own store in Quebec within Holt Renfrew, world-famous jewelers Tiffany's is the place to shop if you want to go with a name-brand that literally makes any girl's heart beat several times faster with a mere glimpse of that special blue box!

With precious tokens of your affection that can range from around $65 into the thousands, now that Tiffany finally has a shop in Montreal, there has never been a better time to pick up something sensational in a special blue box.

For the more modest budget, Tiffany recommends a series of different heart-shaped silver pendants in exclusive Tiffany designs starting at $110.

Browsing through their catalogue, for the lady who wants to showcase her faith and fashion sense, there is nothing better than a Paloma Picasso® hammered cross pendant in sterling silver for $250.

A beefier budget could however yield just about any of their incredible creations such as this Elsa Peretti® Diamonds by the Yard® bracelet in 18k gold for $660.

For more info: www.tiffany.ca/Shopping/Item.aspx?fromGrid=1&sku=10769051&mcat=148207&cid=288153&search_params=s+2-p+10-c+288153-r+150323339-x+-n+6-ri+-ni+0-t+

Whether you're looking for the latest scents from Dolce & Gabbana, Givenchy, Chanel, Gucci or Calvin Klein, why not go with perfume as a gal can never have too much. And, from the comfort of your own home, you need not look further than The Bay's website. For more info: www.thebay.com/eng/beauty-fragrance-forher-thebay

Tammy Beauvais - Pope Shawl

As we all know that there are many guys out there who live to look good. If you are looking for something fabulously fashionable for the man in your life and he happens to be of a larger size, look no further than M.H. Grover's Big and Tall store. Featuring everything from athletic wear to suits, M.H. Grover is the place to shop either online or when you are visiting Montreal. Operating since 1925, this family-run business offers quality at the right prices and excellent customer service so you know you are getting the best the company has to offer. For more info: www.groversbigandtall.com

Dorothy Grant

And, for those of you want to get their special someone something fashionable and Native-themed, look no further than the following two designers.

Tammy Beauvais Designs by Mohawk designer Tammy Beauvais are some of the most incredible Native-themed garments ever produced in Quebec. Featuring a wide selection of traditional and modern Native gear and accessories for men, women and children, Beauvais is the ultimate purveyor of exquisite Ribbon Shirts, traditional dancing outfits, coats, capes and much more. Whether you are looking for everyday apparel like hoodies, sports jackets, dress shirts, skirts and dresses with a Native twist or high-end items like formal attire of all varieties, Beauvais makes it all and ships the products to you through her online

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Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue

Get in on the Lemon Cree craze

store. For more info: https://www.tammybeauvais.com

For those looking for something fabulous with a West Coast feel, high-end designer Dorothy Grant makes all sorts of spectacular creations for both men and women that can be shipped from her Vancouver store. Featuring Haida couture coats, shirts, dresses, ties, suits and much more, Grant's garments are straight off the runway and can be shipped right to your community.

For more info: www.dorothygrant.com

Getting fit ideas

For the fitness fanatic in your home, Santa turns to his own personal trainer (who he apparently ignores) for advice on just what might make a perfect gift.

"My trainer said that it is always good to encourage someone in an activity that they already love doing," said Santa. "Up here in the North Pole I enjoy lifting big bags of toys to work on my strength and I spend a lot of time trying to chase after reindeer."

For those who want to get in on the Lemon Cree craze, the Native-owned company has its own store that sells the equipment used in the courses offered throughout the communities. On its website, Lemon Cree is selling Resist a Balls for $40 as well as Resist a Bands for $17.30 and Lemon Cree t-shirts for $23.

For more info: www.lemoncree.com/#!__boutique/shop-now

If weightlifting is their thing, why not get them a brand-new pair of training gloves to make them look like a pro while they are pumping iron at the gym? Sports Experts has a wide selection on these handy items for her and for him, starting at $14.99, ranging up to $29.99.

For more info: www.sportsexperts.ca/en/equipment/fitness/training-gloves

While at Sports Experts you can also pick up a set of these sleek, expertly designed Nike ankle weights to add some bulk to your athlete's stocking on Christmas morning to help them really build up those leg.

www.sportsexperts.ca/en/equipment/fitness/weights-tubes-and-elastic-bands/nike-9339002-16947

If you really want to add some bounce to their workout, there isn't anything better to put under the tree than the gift that keeps on kicking with some new sneakers and if that is your pleasure, Athletes World certainly has a whole lot to offer!

The new Adidas Response Trail 19 in a sweet pink-and-black combo is an ideal way for her to pamper her feet while working out and retails for a very reasonable $129.

For more info: www.athletesworld.ca/women/footwear/running/adidas-response-trail-19-16465

For the fit monsieur, Nike has all kinds of goodies this season, including these fancy Free Run+3 in yellow or black

For more info: www.athletesworld.ca/men/footwear/running/nike-free-run-3-16460

There are also all kinds of fabulous fit-fun gifts available over at Canadian Tire for the budding athlete or the seasoned fitness fanatic.

This Men's Health Workout Kit is perfect for the guy who wants to brush up on his fitness by training his back and shoulders at home. Designed to ignite the body's fat-burning furnace and build muscle, this kit is designed with a cutting edge circuit routine that can help a guy define his chest, arms and abs.

At $52.99, find out more at www.canadiantire.ca/AST/browse/Gifts/FabulouslyFit/HomeFitnessFan/PRDOVR~0840288P/Mens+Health+Workout+Kit.jsp?locale=en

For the woman looking to get in shape at home, the Pura PurAthletics Aerobic Stepper set with DVD is just perfect for the individual looking to start working out or wants to kick up her routine into something new. Featuring a 26" long durable step riser with skid-proof surface adjusts to 4" to 6" high, this product is designed to target your gluts, thighs, calves, abs and arms while helping you burn calories. Goes for $41.99.

For more info: www.canadiantire.ca/AST/browse/Gifts/FabulouslyFit/HomeFitnessFan/PRDOVR~0840682P/Pura+Stepper+with+DVD.jsp?locale=en

Of course, if you're looking for a piece of equipment to add to the home that delivers an incredible workout and is perfect for any of the growing teens, adults or even Elders of the home to use, Livestrong LS8E Elliptical is what you need. While Lance Armstrong's Livestrong campaign may no longer be happening in light of his doping scandal, the equipment he endorsed is still top-

of-the-line and is now at incredible prices, making them very affordable.

This model offers a high-quality performance that can be adjusted to the needs of the individual for an optimal workout. Its "SIXstar" certified ergonomic frame designed to create a smooth, natural stride eliminating stress and strain on your body so just about anyone can use it with ease. Going for $799.99 down from $1999.99, this item may be too big to actually fit under the tree but it makes for a great surprise come Christmas morning.

Cuisinart Waring Pro meat grinder

For the foodie

Just about every family has a special someone who loves to cook for their loved ones, master new recipes or be adventurous when it comes to braving new territory in the world of culinary delights and so for the foodie on your list, Santa has his own recommendations.

"There are all sorts of different foodies out there, those who love kitchen gadgetry, those who go for divine ingredients to cook with and those who seek knowledge. As a foodie myself, I know about food-related fun and so these are the things I will be packing my sack with this season," said Santa.

For the cook who is all about making fun and festive cakes throughout the year, Future Shop's website features a wide variety of Wilton cake pans. Running from $7.99 for a simple fantasy carriage shape up to $65.99 for a deluxe set of diamond shaped pans, why not order your chef a variety of pans from Disney characters to sports themes to religious appropriate cake shapes.

For more info: www.futureshop.ca

If you are going in the direction of baking products and cakes are what your foodie loves to make, Future Shop also has this incredible Wilton professional desert decorator available exclusively on its website. Designed for easy one-hand use, this slick, stainless steel decorating tool is easy to use and perfect to perk up any desert or appetizer. The product also comes with a recipe book and attachments to make shells, stars, rosettes and leaves. Available for $36.99.

For more info: www.futureshop.ca

While single-serve k-cup coffeemakers have been the rage for the last few years, the cook who really loves to entertain needs something that makes excellent coffee with enough to go around for everyone at the table. For them Santa recommends this sleek and sophisticated Cuisinart 12-cup percolator. This cool cordless percolator makes brews four to 12 cups of fresh coffee in a snap of the fingers. It also features a stainless-steel finish that is designed to retain heat and an indicator light that lets you know when your coffee is ready. For only $79.99, this product is dying to be under your tree!

Kitchen Aid KSM120ER Custom Stand Mixer in Empire Red

For more info: www.bestbuy.ca

Also by Cuisinart, for the cooks who like to make their wild meat go the extra mile, grind up moose or caribou for burgers on the BBQ or even get into the practice of making their own sausages, this stunning Cuisinart Waring Pro meat grinder is just the ticket! In beautiful brushed stainless-steel housing, this grinder features a heavy-duty 300-watt motor, a durable diecast hopper and simple operation with easy to operate on/off switch with reverse function. This functional and fun item is both practical and a party-all-in-one. Now on sale for about $100 at Canadian Tire.

For more info: www.canadiantire.ca/AST/browse/Gifts/Foodie/Gourmet/PRD~0432331P/Cuisinart+Waring+Pro+Meat+Grinder.jsp?locale=en

If you are looking for something absolutely dazzling to brighten up any kitchen that will yield years of use, the incredibly colourful Komachi 9-piece knife set features each blade in a different colour of the rainbow so that you never grab the wrong one for the task at hand.

These knives come in a transparent knife block and their colour is made by bonding food-safe resin to high-carbon stainless-steel blade so that the blades retain super-sharp edges. The non-stick resin coating resists corrosion, makes cleaning simple, and helps blades glide through food with ease. Available at the Linen Chest, this product is available for about $144.95.

For more info: www.linenchest.com/komachi-9-piece-knife-block-set.html

According to Santa, if you really want to indulge your foodie this season, there is nothing better than the ultimate kitchen gadget that culinary dreams are made out of – the Kitchen Aid KSM120ER Custom Stand Mixer in Empire Red.

This gorgeous and flashy mixer comes with flat beater, dough hook, wire whip and recipes. Featuring a tilt-head design that allows clear access to the beater and bowl, it has a 4.5-quart capacity, a 10-speed solid-state control and a 325-watt heavy-duty motor. Available for $259.25.

For more info: www.amazon.ca

If your foodie already owns all of the gadgets under the sun and you want to get them something high quality that will last an eternity, the Tiffany diamond of

the kitchen world is nothing other than the crockery made by Le Creuset.

Though their price is in the hundreds, these much-coveted cooking pans and pots are the top-of-the-line in quality and classic style. For example, Le Creuset's incredible saucier pan, available in a sharky grey, traditional orange, blue or yellow and made from the world's absolute finest enameled cast iron costs $300. However, this product will last a lifetime and will create tears of joy come Christmas morning. Available at The Bay.

For more info:
www.thebay.com/eng/home-cookware-Saucier_Pan-thebay/203793

Outdoor Edge Blaze N' Bone Knife Combo

Hunting for gifts

Santa is always extra careful when he flies over Eeyou Istchee as he knows there are most likely Cree hunters waiting to pluck one of his reindeer out of the sky for some tasty meat on Christmas morning.

Thank God he can cloak his sleigh with invisibility – he is Santa after all.

"For the hunters on my list, I've had my elves on the lookout high and low for the most wonderful gifts I could find for them," said Santa.

Let your hunter know you love him by getting him his own personalized camouflage Christmas stocking that you can fill with goodies for the bush and traditional treats from Cabelas Canada. These 40-cm fleece stockings have the individual's name dyed right into the fabric and come in six different types of colourful camo. You could have one made for each family member, if you wanted a camo-Christmas theme. Available online only from Cabelas Canada for $19.99.

For more info:
www.cabelas.ca/index.cfm?pageID=129&&promoid=0000000989&SrchSection=2106&ID=42264

Browning A-Bolt II™ Composite Stalker Cal. 270 Win

While your hunter no doubt has his fair share of hunting knives, does he have the means to keep them sharp in the convenience of his own home? If he doesn't, the Chef's Choice Sportsman Hunting Knife Sharpener is designed specifically to keep hunting and sporting knives razor sharp. The product offers a variety of different edges so no matter what the preference, this sharpener can deliver. On special for $179.99.

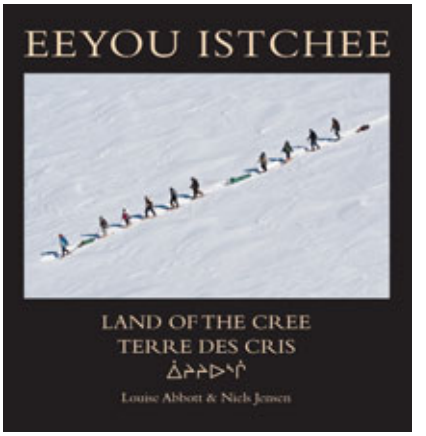
For more info:
www.cabelas.ca/index.cfm?pageID=129&&promoid=0000000989&SrchSection=1196&ID=9077

While you are at it, why not pair the sharpeners with this Outdoor Edge Blaze N' Bone Knife Combo? Featuring high-quality orange-handled knives, this lightweight four-piece combo is ideal for skinning and deboning big game. The set includes a 4-1/4" gut hook skinner, a 4.8" boning/filet knife, a tungsten carbide sharpener, and Mossy Oak Break-Up nylon pouch/belt scabbard to keep it all together. Goes for $39.99.

For more info:
www.cabelas.ca/index.cfm?pageID=129&&promoid=0000000989&SrchSection=1190&ID=42587

For the bushman on your list, jolly old Santa recommends this Leatherman Charge TTi Multi-Tool with titanium handles and leather sheath as it is several tools in one, making it an ideal item to

THE PERFECT HOLIDAY GIFT



The book is a startling 200-photo essay featuring interviews and conversations with the Cree of Eeyou Istchee in English, French and Cree, the book is ideal to teach young Crees about their culture and inspire discussions about Cree ancestry between young and old.

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The Nation is turning 20! To commemorate this historic occasion, the Nation is embarking on a retrospective countdown to its 20th Anniversary in November 2013. In the next 24 issues, the Nation flashback will feature some of the Nation's stories, photos and award winning coverage throughout the years, which will be compiled in a 20th collector's edition issue. This Nation flashback is made possible by the generosity of **Imprimerie Lebonfon**.

Nation
"The time has come to reap the fields of history. The time has come at last to harvest what has been sown for us by four hundred years of men and women and courage, rooted in the soil and now returned to it..."

OCTOBER 6, 1995

Volume 2, No. 21

REZ NOTES

Greetings dear mortals. Allow me to welcome you to this page. One that, with your assistance, cooperation and blind obedience, will flourish and live on in our pages, hearts and minds for as long as is humanly possible. We all know how all of Creedom loves gossip, rumours and truths even. So I command you to contact "Rez Notes" by letter, fax, phone, ESP, classifieds or by any other means you can dream up c/o *The Nation* for all of the above and much hilarity will, no doubt, ensue. Bear in mind that the juiciest stories cannot be published in a family magazine such as this but send them in anyway. Without further ado and in alphabetical order (snicker, snicker).

WASKAGANISH- Billy Diamond was elected, for the umpteenth time it seems, Chief by acclamation. Is there no worthy successor? **Jimmy Trapper** captured the Deputy Chief title. Coming in third was Billy's son, **Ian**. Meanwhile, on the other side of the tracks, the community's waste water treatment plant is slated to be in operation sometime in October and construction of the community gathering place has started. No nasty rumours to pass on. Yet.

EASTMAIN- "Business as usual," our roving operative reports. He also spotted three caribou on the Eastmain highway "within killing distance" but, alas, he was unarmed.

WEMINDJI- Huge dance competition in town a while back with the **Mistissini team** and **Waastuuskun Youth** sharing first place in the youth groups category. In the youth couples category **Evelyn and Eddie Shecapio** took first place. For the adult couples class **Tanya Visitor and Bruce Hughboy** of Wemindji danced their way to gold. **Margaret Weistche** bested all in the female adult singles competition while **Leslie Shecapio** triumphed in the male adult singles. Other champs include **Evelyn Shecapio**, **Joseph Shecapio Jr.** and the team of **Kashechewan- Kash Quan-Nusk**. "Nothing unusual" in the way of sightings, UFO or otherwise, reports our informant but promises to keep us posted.

CHISASIBI- UFO's spotted in the skies above Chisasibi a while back. Some were convinced they were of the extra-terrestrial variety only to learn later that they were only government search and rescue crews.

NEMASKA- All was well but quiet in Nemaska during "Culture Week" a.k.a "Moose Week." Most residents including the Chief and students were "in the bush" but no moose have yet been killed. They were spotted but weren't in range.

MONTREAL- By the time you read this the Native Friendship Centre will have had its annual festival at Vanier College. Motorcyclist **Katejun Coonishish** of Ojay and his entourage were in town for the moto-x competitions at the big O. He captured third place in the pee wee category. *The Gazette* even published a piece on him a day or two before the race. In a totally unrelated story, a reporter asked **David Cliche,** after his presentation at the Eeyou Astchee Commission, if the Quebec government has a "military plan" for dealing with the Crees in the event of the province separating. Cliche responded with a disdainful look that said how dare you, you little insect.

VAL D'OR- Rumour has it that **Wachiya** is reopening its doors for the bustling Val d'Or tourist market. The Moose! is still open in the city that never sleeps.

ELSEWHERE- Erland Campbell, a cousin of North of 60's **Tina Keeper**, tells me Keeper is "getting married to some Chief in Northern Manitoba." He's still waiting for his invite.

Ndiamon

Update 2012
on Rez Notes

It's amazing to think that there are Cree people who are now adults who weren't even born when the first issue of *the Nation* hit the stands. Yes, the little magazine that could is leaving its teen years and becoming, finally, an adult. Rez Notes, though, is still a child at 17 years.

Rez Notes was created to be the gossip page of the Cree Nation. What couldn't be said in a straight news article could be said in the column. I'm not ashamed to say it was hated and loved by many.

The Nation came as a shock to many when it first appeared in late December 1993. Someone, who should have known better, asked, "What are they going to write about!?" when the announcement was made that there would be a new kid in town. Another, who knew better, exclaimed, "They're just a bunch of troublemakers!" Possibly the best endorsement any independent newspaper could ask for from any politician.

There weren't many publications available during those dark days. We had TV and that was it. All there was were rumours of corrupt politicians, other ne'er-do-wells, a growing Cree opposition and the usual hockey debates.

I remember being at the arena in Val-d'Or during the Cree Hockey Tournament handing out the debut issue. At the end of the night I was disheartened and a bit insulted to see copies discarded on the mud-streaked floors of the arena.

Reprinted here for your reading pleasure is the first installment of the Reservation Notes. Enjoy.

Ndiamon

NEWS

PRICE WARS NOT OUR POLICY, SAYS NORTHERN

Northern Stores used to have a monopoly over Cree customers and their money. But those worry-free years for Northern are a thing of the past, a victim of the realities of the marketplace.

Now for the first time Northern faces competition from Native businesses and it's fighting back with everything it's got.

Winnipeg-based North West Co. has $585 million in annual sales and it's not about to give up on that market without a fight.

But some Native-owned stores say Northern goes too far, using unfair competition to snuff out rivals.

Sandy's Corner Store in Whapmagoostui was one of the first stores to offer Northern competition in a Native community in Canada.

Sandy's manager Kevin Hatt says Northern is waging a concerted campaign to drive his store out of business. He says Northern is undercutting competitors' prices to the point where no one makes any money. But once the competition is driven out, Hatt warns, Northern will hoist up its prices again.

Bernie Delmaire, operations manager for Northern stores in Nunavik, flatly rejects these charges. "No, I have never heard that. Our policy is never to have a price war. We don't do that."

Delmaire defended Northern's policy of sending employees into rival stores to check up on their prices. "That's normal business practice everywhere. We have to check our competition to see what's going on to stay competitive."

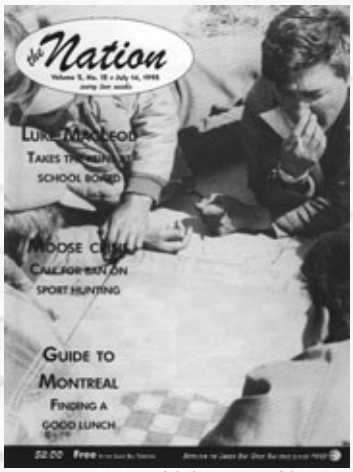
Still, Delmaire acknowledged that Northern has had to adjust to a new competitive market it's never faced before. "It's becoming more competitive, for sure."

But Northern isn't worried, he added. "That's the way the world is going. I don't think we lose sleep over it."

Jim Deyell, operations manager for Northern stores in James Bay, said the new competition is healthy and northern consumers are benefitting.

"It's a concern in the eyes of the merchant only. The consumer is the one who makes the choice."

—*Alex Roslin*



Volume 2, No. 15

Update 2012
on Northern Stores

This story showed how things had changed since the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), the world's oldest continuous corporation, had a virtual monopoly with the Crees and Inuit of James Bay and Hudson Bay. Many Cree remember HBC as helping to save the beaver in James Bay, giving credit to make it through the hard years, and high prices.

HBC changed the name of their northern outlets to Northern Stores and then sold the chain. As a result there wasn't the same loyalty and some Cree saw a business opportunity because of the high prices. Northern Stores has been losing ground as the retail outlet of choice. Mistissini was one of the early departures by Northern Stores and the most recent has been Wemindji's decision not to renew their lease and bring in food giant Loblaw's instead.

Changes in brand loyalty, northern food subsidy programs and Cree competition have affected Northern Stores' ability to change from a monopoly to a competitive market.

Will Nicholls

Nation 20 1993-2013 flashback

20th flashback sponsored by Lebonfon

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Nation 20 1993-2013 flashback

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To commemorate this milestone, the Nation is embarking on a retrospective countdown to its **20th Anniversary in November 2013.**

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The Nation is also shaking things up in 2013 with a new website, improved social media presence, exciting new advertising opportunities, and a 20th Anniversary Bash in November 2013... stay tuned for more details.

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THE SDBJ CONGRATULATES THE NOMINATED ENTREPRENEURS AND WINNERS OF THE 5TH EDITION OF THE CREE ENTREPRENEURSHIP GALA HELD IN VAL D'OR ON NOVEMBER 8TH

The SDBJ congratulates the winners in all categories, and especially the entrepreneurs fostered by the SDBJ, such as Michel Shecapio, of M.Y. Surveying, and brothers Richard and David Iserhoff of the R & D Eenou Lumber Inc., hardware store in Mistissini.

We congratulate the Eeyou Economic Group/CFDC Inc. team for organizing the gala. We also wish to highlight the 25th anniversary of this organization devoted to the Cree entrepreneurs of the Eeyou Istchee area.

"Year after year, for the past 25 years, Eeyou Economic Group / CFDC Inc., has been supporting business projects throughout Eeyou Istchee area. Over the years, EEG has been able to provide its assets and skills to actively participate in the development of Cree entrepreneurship. I wish to highlight the magnificent work achieved by the EEG team and by the Board of Directors headed by Mr. Sidney Orr", said SDBJ's CEO, Mr. Raymond Thibault.

"Since the fulfillment of the investment partnership with EEG, two business ventures have been financed; they are, M.Y. Surveying and Beesum Transport. For 2013, we know that many entrepreneurs will apply for funding. The SDBJ will work closely with the EEG team to ensure that Cree businesses will receive funding appropriate to their needs", explained Mr. Alain Coulombe, Deputy General Manager of Economic Development.

www.sdbj.gouv.qc.ca

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For when he wants to get a closer look at the approaching prey, the Tasco 10x50 binocular by Brunton is a great gift that any hunter in need of a new set will appreciate.

According to Canadian Tire, this 10x50 binocular with coated lenses has a wide-angle field-of-view with an objective diameter of 50/45/50 mm depending on selection and features a BAK-4 porro prism optics are fully multicoated for improved light transmission, polymer frame construction and includes lens covers, neck strap and case. Weighing only 23 oz, this product retails for $54.99.

For more info: www.canadiantire.ca/

If you're looking to get him a new firearm for his holiday hunt, Le Barron has some great online specials this season available on their website and in store. For under $200, you can get a Russian Siminov SKS semi-auto rifle with a hardwood stock for the amazing price of just $174 and $192.63 for the laminated stock model.

For more info: www.lebaron.ca/pdf-files/web_spec/sks2_762x39_web.pdf

Rocktivity Sit, Crawl 'n Stand Band

Another amazing deal is available at Dante Sports where they are now offering a Browning A-Bolt II™ Composite Stalker Cal. 270 Win for just $547.77. This rifle features a tough, non-glare graphite-fiberglass stock with slight palm swell, a fast-cycling, 60° bolt lift, a crisp, adjustable trigger, a hinged floorplate with detachable box magazine and a caliber 270 Win.

For more info: https://shop.dantesports.com/items.php?s=1&c=2

And, if he is on the market for something to keep him warm while being incredibly cool amongst the other hunters, the Rocky Scent IQ 3-in-1 parka is just the thing for him. This parka is just the thing for the pampered bushman as it features a RealTree Ap design camo pattern plus scent control in shell and inner jacket, silent hunter suede fabric with micro fibres that keep moisture away from skin, a waterproof and breathable outer jacket and a fleece inner jacket with 3.5 oz Thinsulate insulation to keep him toasty. Goes for $279.99 at Canadian Tire.

For more info: www.canadiantire.ca

Gifts for the younger ones

When it comes to Santa's biggest fan base, he doesn't worry so much about making suggestions to parents as the older kids often seem to know exactly what they want and will tell you all about it. As for the little people who can't articulate as much, he had some thoughts to share.

"My elves have already been hard at work making toys since the letters for Christmas 2012 started coming in last January," said Santa.

For those looking to supplement the bounty that Santa will already be bringing with items that the little ones may not have, Santa suggests that toy shoppers take a look at the suggestions made by the Canadian Toy Testing Council (CTTC). This non-profit organization offers ideas for new toy purchases based on the expert advice of parents, children and educators. Here are a few items that topped their lists by age group:

For the under one-year-old crowd, the CTTC recommends the Rocktivity Sit, Crawl 'n Stand Band by Hasbro for kids aged 6-36 months. This one-man band-stand for baby is all about learning, making music and fun for the very little ones and does so with the use of keyboard, drums, guitar and jukebox functions. While this item may be pricy at $89.99, it is not something that baby will tire of easily.

For more info: www.hasbro.com/shop/

Toddlers learning all about what to eat and how it's made, will love the Fisher-Price Servin' Surprises Cook 'n Serve Kitchen and Table Set. This kitchen-themed activity table is adjustable so that it can grow with your child, plus it comes with all sorts of interactive features for hours of play. The set has a table, a removable oven, a serving tray, four slices of pizza with toppings, a pizza cutter, four cookies, a cookie sheet, two forks, two spoons, two cups, two plates for your child to learn all about meals, manners and cleanup. Retailing at $70, this product will be a surefire hit with the 2+ crowd.

For more info: www.fisher-price.com/en_CA/product/68204

Leap Pad2 Explorer Leap Frog

Also for the preschool crowd, the CTTC recommends the Leap Pad2 Explorer Leap Frog. A perfect starter learning tablet for little people, the Leap Pad2 gets kids to use their own creativity and explore this toy through its various digital functions, such as its front-and-back cameras and video recorders, 4GB of memory as well as library of hundreds of educational games, apps, eBooks, videos and music. For more info: http://shop.leapfrog.com/leapfrog/jump/LeapPad2/category/cat1020006

EMPLOYMENT NOTICE

GESTION ADC IS PRESENTLY SEARCHING FOR AN ENTHUSIASTIC AND AMBITIOUS INDIVIDUAL TO FILL A PERMANENT FULL TIME POSITION AS:

DIRECTOR OF GESTION ADC

LOCATION OF WORK: TO BE DETERMINED

Under the authority of the President/CEO of Gestion ADC, the Director of Gestion ADC will ensure the accuracy of the bids and assume the totality of the related operations for the different catering, facility management and janitorial projects under his supervision. He must also provide support to the operations regarding the production of reports and assist other departments in the various related files, all of this, while respecting the laws, rules, regulations, procedures, policies and others. As a member of the Management team, he must participate in all of the meetings of that Committee and provide counsel when required to resolve any problems and to ensure that the various Management policies required for the company to fully meet its objectives are implemented. He must also manage and supervise the administration staff under Gestion ADC.

Employment Requirements:

- Bachelor's degree in Business Administration or Commerce is required; MBA or professional designation is considered a definite asset;
- From three to five years of managerial experience is required;
- Possessing the appropriate computer knowledge (Microsoft programs) is required or Project Management software;
- Possessing excellent aptitudes in human resources management is necessary;
- Possessing aptitudes to efficiently prepare and deliver presentations of information, whether written or verbal;
- Excellent knowledge in English language, whether reading, writing or speaking is required;
- Basic knowledge of the French language, whether reading, writing or speaking is required;
- Knowledge of the Cree language is a definite asset;
- Possessing the ability to communicate, to have good judgement and efficient leadership qualities are requirements;
- Must be able to manage Gestion ADC Administration employees;
- Excellent negotiation skills;
- Must be knowledgeable in regards to the standard labor laws (i.e.CSST), the regulations and be qualified to respect them and ensure they are respected by others at all times;
- The knowledge of application and implementation of collective agreements is considered a definite asset;
- Must be available to travel frequently and/or to live more or less long periods in isolated areas or work sites;
- Must possess the adequate training or be available to follow the training required.

CREECO's subsidiary Gestion ADC is a Cree owned company that delivers quality janitorial and catering services throughout Eeyou Istchee and Quebec. We are leaders in the industry and offer employees competitive salaries, excellent benefits such as: Northern Allowance, Cree Pension, and Group Insurance. In addition, supports training and encourages employee advancement.

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The candidates must submit their resumes by no later than 5 p.m.

Wednesday, December 12, 2012

Madeline Iserhoff, Interim Human Resources Director

Cree Construction and Development Company Ltd.

3 Aahppisaach Road – P.O. Box 860, Chisasibi Quebec J0M 1E0

Fax: (819) 855-1704 Phone: (819) 855-1700 Ext.229 Email: miserhoff@ccdc.qc.ca

PLEASE INCLUDE A COPY OF YOUR DIPLOMAS AND/OR CERTIFICATE, INCLUDING TRANSCRIPTS OF ALL AND ANY FORMAL TRAINING. IN ADDITION, TWO (2) REFERENCES PREFERRABLY YOUR CURRENT AND/OR FORMER EMPLOYER/SUPERVISOR. FAILURE TO DO SO WILL RESULT IN LOSS OF POINTS. THANK YOU!

A fun and affordable gift for children aged five and over who love dragons is the Orb Factory Sticky Mosaics Dragons Kit by Mastermind Toys. Your child can create four dragon-themed mosaics with this easy-to-use kit that employs coloured and numbered sticky tiles.

For more info: http://www.mastermindtoys.com/The-Orb-Factory-Sticky-Mosaics-Dragons-Kit.aspx

Another creative toy that the CTTC recommends for the six-and-up crowd is the Splat Art: Blops & Dribbles In Need of Your Scribbles set. Perfect for the budding artist, this Scholastic set features full-colour photographic images of your basic everyday stuff like fingerprints, fungus, paint drips, paper wads, cabbages, coffee rings and helps your child turn them into masterpieces!

Orb Factory Sticky Mosaics Dragons Kit

For more info: www.scholastic.ca/kids/klutz/art_drawing/splatart.htm

The CTTC literally has hundreds of other suggestions for those who just don't know what to get the kids this season.

To peruse their many lists of incredible toys, go to: http://toy-testing.org

Sharing with the needy

For the family that feels they have more than enough to go around and wants to teach their children about the gift of giving to those who do not have the basics to get by, Santa applauds your generous spirit and has his own suggestions for you.

"While I love to give to the children of the world, I do so in the hope that my generous spirit catches on and the spirit of generosity is celebrated throughout the world at this time of the year," said Santa.

Heifer International is an organization that's all about giving agricultural gifts to impoverished individuals in foreign nations like Rwanda and to give families a hand-up, rather than a hand-out. Along with gifts to schools and major gifts like packages to get gardens started or helping women become empowered, supporters can choose to gift heifers, sheep, rabbits, pigs, goats and chicks to help out a family.

For more info on this incredible project to end world hunger: www.heifer.org

If you are looking to sponsor a needy child in a foreign country or buying a goat for a family or sponsoring a special project for girls (because they are often the most needy), Plan Canada has some inspirational projects that make for wonderful gifts. And, if you are not sure what kind of a donation to give in the name of the special someone on your list, Plan Canada has an incredible gift guide to help you pick out something special to give mom, dad, teachers or children. For example, for mom you could contribute to helping out with a newborn health checkup, maternity beds and supplies or baby chicks to help create a source of income and food for women to help provide for their families.

For more info: http://plancanada.ca

For the family that wants to give a specific kind of gift or make sure that their donations are going to those who need them most in the world, UNICEF Survival Gifts make for an incredible donation gift for any family or individual. Choose from health, education, water, food, play, emergency or most needed gift categories to choose something special that will be particularly meaningful for your family to contribute abroad. For example, show your artistic child how a $10 donation for a writing and sketch pack will help inspire the mind of a child in an impoverished nation with pencils and paper. Or, an athletic child could make a contribution of $12 to give two soccer balls to help the gift of sport to help children heal their traumatic wounds. UNICEF also provides for those in need of disaster relief and suffering from starvation and also has projects to help some of the neediest people in the world.

For more info: https://secure3.convio.net/uncfca/site/Ecommerce/1657021215?FOLDER=1056&store_id=1201

On behalf of the Nation and Santa, happy giving and receiving!

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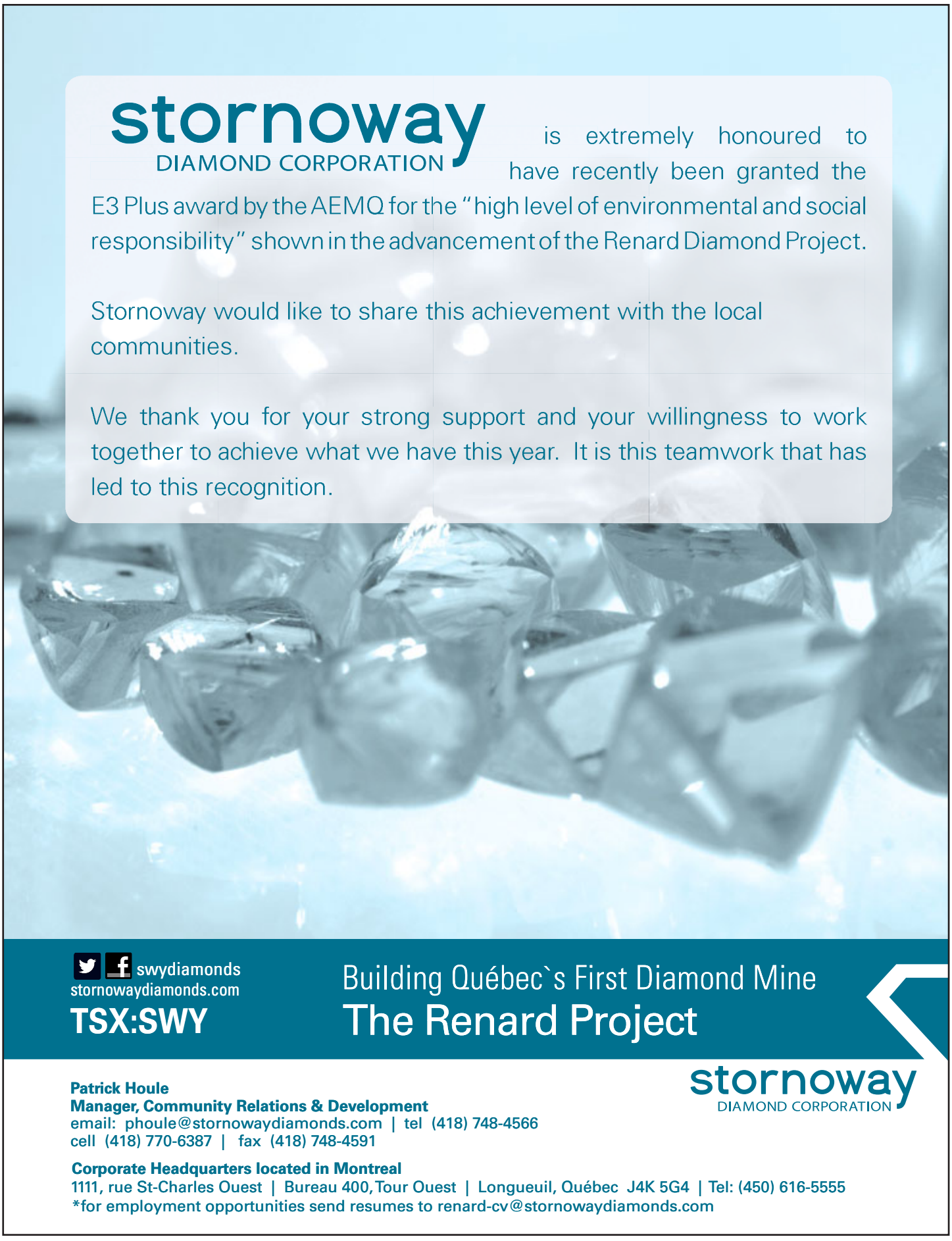

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is extremely honoured to have recently been granted the E3 Plus award by the AEMQ for the "high level of environmental and social responsibility" shown in the advancement of the Renard Diamond Project.

Stornoway would like to share this achievement with the local communities.

We thank you for your strong support and your willingness to work together to achieve what we have this year. It is this teamwork that has led to this recognition.

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From foreclosure to sustainability

Kevin Blacksmith recognized as entrepreneur of the year

by Brandon Judd

You're not making your payments, so we're going to have to take your truck – your business – from you. Kevin Blacksmith of Waswanipi heard this bouncing around in his head as he worked his snowplowing job on Route 113, and wondered if the work would pick up like the Band Council said it would. The government grants he received ran out after year two, and the $3000-per-month payments were impossible to keep up with unless there was work, and soon. That was year three. Four years later, Blacksmith was hearing different news.

"Your sister nominated you for the entrepreneur of the year award," Blacksmith recalls hearing from his daughter, Cassidie. "And that's not even the good news – you won."

The Eeyou Economic Group's Nature, Trade and Industry Conference in early November in Val-d'or brought together First Nations business owners from around Eeyou Itschee, culminating in a gala where Blacksmith took home the Entrepreneur of the Year award.

The gala and awards ceremony celebrated its fifth anniversary this year, while the business conference that has sprung up around it enjoyed its third edition. Before, the gala was a stand-alone event to honour the entrepreneurial achievements of the Cree community. But the Waswanipi-based Eeyou Economic Group (EEG), which partnered with the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Economic Development Commission (FNQLEDC) for the event, saw an opportunity in the gathering of minds at the gala.

"We thought if we were bringing everyone out for the gala, we should do something constructive, too," said Manon Richmond, Director General of the EEG. "We really want to solidify business relationships between First Nations. Often we see big gatherings but the Cree involvement is minimal, so we wanted to improve this. It's a good opportunity to network."

Kevin Blacksmith of Waswanipi

Five awards were given out this year to acknowledge the range of Cree business enterprises this year. M.Y. Surveying (Mistissini) won emerging entrepreneur, while Mista Hot Dog (Mistissini), of food cart fame, won youth entrepreneur. R & D Eenou Lumber (Mistissini) took home the business partnership award, while Charlotte Cooper (of Waswanipi) won the 25 years of service award. And, of course, Blacksmith took home his own hardware.

"I'm still in shock right now, I don't know why they picked me," he said, laughing.

His daughter Cassidie Decontie, Youth Business Advisor at the EEG, laid out his case without the shackles of modesty. Since founding his transportation company, Blacksmith has fought tooth and nail for sustainability and, sometime, survival.

"His truck almost got taken from him," Decontie said. "It was not easy, especially financially, and all through that time he didn't give up while others would've. He loves what he does and that's what keeps him going every day. That inspires me also, because I'd love to call my career a hobby as well."

The selection committee concurred.

"We saw on the nomination form how passionately [Blacksmith] devotes and dedicates himself to being sustainable on his own," said Richmond. "He created his own job, and we saw how much of a role model he was for his family."

Since nearly losing his truck, Blacksmith found consistent and plentiful work, catching up on his monthlies and paying off his debt in year five. Now, he's planning to expand his business with another truck, while balancing the demands of his promotion to foreman at the highway presents.

The EEG awarded the contribution entrepreneurs make to their communities. Small and medium businesses make up a huge portion of the jobs in Cree communities, they said, and entrepreneurs like Blacksmith give back to the community in the way of increased work. Richmond's goal was to honour those working outside of a 9-to-5 schedule, since their achievements rarely get recognized.

Blacksmith, for his part, said the award was more motivation than achievement, while reiterating the decidedly unorthodox work schedule.

"It gives me more motivation when I get up in the morning," Blacksmith said. "Hard work pays off. It's hard work when you drive those things; it's tiring every day and you sometimes get burned out on those 12- or 14-hour shifts. So it is great that someone noticed."

PENNIES FOR ATTAWAPISKAT

Every year the Canadian government produces approximately 1.5 billion pennies. Every year, that is except for this one. As of this year the Canadian penny will disappear and no longer be produced.

It is my idea to help the penny make a huge difference in First Nations communities. 1.5 billion pennies will provide 10 new playgrounds in northern communities that don't have one and 2 foster homes in Attawapiskat First Nation - keeping the children close to home.

Please help me by collecting and sending your pennies to do one last heroic thing for our First Nations children.

Wes Prankard

Bring your pennies in to any TD Canada Trust
TD Canada Trust for Northern Starfish Acct: 151 5213225

Or, trade them in for a cheque or money order and send to:
NorthernStarfish
6283 Finlay Ave., Niagara Falls, ON L2G 4C4
For more information, please visit www.northernstarfish.org

Wes Prankard building playground

Native sights and sounds

Wapikoni Mobile screens nine new projects by Aboriginal youth

by Akiva Levitas

Enjoying the fruits of one's labour is the most satisfying part of working on a project. After spending six weeks in Montreal aiding youth in the art of filmmaking and production, Wapikoni Mobile showcased the work produced by young urban Aboriginals.

On November 13, Wapikoni Mobile screened nine short films and music videos produced by Aboriginals living Montreal at the 11 Nations Art Gallery in the Old Port. It's fitting that they chose 11 Nations to screen these works because thanks to the generosity of curator Nadine St. Louis, Wapikoni Mobile setup a small production studio for the youth there.

Still from "Corriger le Tableau"

What made Wapikoni Mobile's work in Montreal different from the other First Nations communities that they have visited was that in the city they weren't working with individuals from only one First Nation, but a group of youth from all the First Nations of Quebec.

Speaking to the large crowd that had gather for the screening, Manon Barbeau, the director and founder of Wapikoni Mobile, said, "Thank you all for being here and supporting First Nations art. I love you all."

The evening started with three short films that were produced prior to Wapikoni Mobile's Montreal visit. The first one, *Corriger le tableau* (Correct the Blackboard), is simple in its aesthetic yet powerful in its message.

Afterwards, they showed a short showcasing the lives of the Mapuche Indians of Chile, followed by *Micta*, an experimental short that is hard to describe yet visually quite beautiful.

After the three clips, the crowd was ready for the nine new shorts. The first was Anemeshu Ishkueu, a music video by local musician Tony James Tooma, whose song was about love and heartbreak as well as the difficulties in life.

Following Tooma's music clip was a short film by Melissa Mollen Dupuis, who in fact, filmed two videos during the time Wapikoni Mobile was in Montreal. The mentors at Wapikoni were quite impressed with Dupuis' tenacity, resolve and ability to jump at any opportunity that presented itself. Prior to the screening Dupuis said, "A big thanks to Wapikoni Mobile for encouraging us and making our ideas come to life on screen."

The first of Dupuis' two films was about Montreal's annual march for the missing and murdered Aboriginal women. Showcasing the growth of the movement, the video provided statistics and information regarding this ongoing problem faced by many Aboriginal women.

Her second film was a window into the world of beading amongst the First Nations of Quebec. Not only did Dupuis relate beading's importance to the culture and history of First Nations, but provided on a more personal view on how beading can be a fun and relaxing activity.

On a different note, the short documentary, *Dave l'indien* deals with the subject of homelessness and generosity. According to director David Dumais, "It's about demystifying the life of the homeless."

During the screening, two up-and-coming Aboriginal rappers, Joey Ruperthouse and Joey Shaw, showcased their musical and video talents to the audience. Ruperthouse dedicated his song *Il faut que t'arrêtes ça* to his brother who passed away two weeks after the video shoot. "I made this rap video against drug abuse and to show how it affected my family," Ruperthouse said.

Shaw dedicated his rap and spoken-word video, Survival of the Fittest, to his mother who passed away when he was 16. "I heard about Wapikoni Mobile a few years back and when I heard they were coming to Montreal I reached out to them," Shaw said. "Something inspired me and they helped me make a project of this calibre."

The remaining shorts were produced as a team effort by all the youths who participated in the workshop. The first was *We Are Not Alone*, which offers a peek into Native spirituality and experiences in sweat lodges. The second group video was A Long Time Ago, an animated short telling the story of a hunter struggling for survival.

The last of the three was *Living in Montreal*, which was quite an eye-opener as it provided a glimpse into what compelled some Natives to come to Montreal.

The experience and training that these young Aboriginal artists got from Wapikoni Mobile will definitely have a lasting effect on them and help change the Aboriginal art landscape in Quebec

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* Source: Statistics Canada

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You can also visit **www.hydroquebec.com/residentiel/remplacement-frigo.**

This program is currently available in the Nord-du-Québec region. Other conditions apply.

Soundtrack of my life

Wemindji's Marion Maybee talks about the importance of music in her life

by Eleanor Cowan

My son, Raymond Maybee Jr., like his father before him, started up his own band called The Remedies. It's true that music always played a healing role in my family. I'd also say that fiddle music is what links the Quebec Cree to every other Canadian province in the happiest of ways.

My favourite tune is *St. Ann's Reel*, composed by Ned Landry, a fiddler from St. John's New Brunswick. I remember the wonderful summer day I first heard that melody. I was eight years old and our family lived in a large, oblong, tent-frame house in Old Factory. (The Cree didn't use the typical circular teepees that you see around today. Historically, we used our own oblong house design.)

On that sunny afternoon, my dad brought home a surprise gift for our family and we all crowded around to open up the box that contained a wind-up 78-rpm record player. Because I had small fingers, Dad asked me to insert the little needle in the long arm of the player and oh my, when I heard that tune, I knew how to dance even though I'd never had a lesson. My feet flew as though I'd been dancing all my life, my arms and legs in perfect tune to the music. It felt exhilarating and wonderful, like entering a different world every single day of the week, except Sunday. We were taught that Sunday was a day of rest. My dad kept a fiddle of his own at home but I never heard him play it. He stopped playing when he got married.

Over my teen years, my cousin, Elizabeth Fairies, and I, danced away to that fiddle music to our hearts' content. I'd invite her to my house and one time we laughed uncontrollably when she wore a hole out of her stocking from our afternoon of dancing. We loved fiddle music!

Up until I was 17 years old, my mother took me to square dances in Old Factory in the old Anglican Church Mission. We'd arrive at 9 pm and square danced until the wee hours of the morning!

One day my mom told me to cook a goose in our outdoor teepee and as I gathered wood for the fire I spotted Bobby F. Visitor and Bobby E. Georgekish coming down the dusty road with their fiddle and guitar. I invited them to serenade me in the teepee while I basted the goose for several hours – and they did.

Once I got a job, I bought my own tapes and listened to fiddle music all the time while washing the dishes and making the beds. I danced all over the house, all by myself. I also bought opera and classical music as well as country music so you could say that even though my father never played his own fiddle for us, his gift of music to our family kept on giving and giving.

I met my husband, a white man, at my residential school, Horden Hall, in Moose Factory. Raymond was a young assistant cook in the kitchen when I lived there, and I told him how much I loved my family. He wanted us to live close to them, so we left Horden Hall together and got married on a Wednesday. (In those days, Cree families reserved Sundays for visiting and got married on weekdays, not on weekends as happens now.)

We began our married life living with my parents. We hoped to build our own home but work was scarce in Wemindji. So in June 1963, when my husband was offered another job in the kitchen of the residential school, we moved back. It was grim for me to leave my family, but one of the first things Raymond did was start up a wonderful rock-and-roll band called The Zombies and, of course, I danced at all of their dances.

At that time, my husband met Clarence Loutitt, the maintenance man at the school, and an amazing fiddler. They became fast friends and when my husband and his band took rest breaks,

Clarence would step up to the stage with his fiddle and bring the house down. There were five musicians in Raymond's rock band: Raymond, singer, his brother Lloyd, (lead guitar), Fred Fonier (bass guitar), Barry Beales (rhythm guitar) and Burt Morrison (drums). It was so much fun. Music had saved the day for me, once again.

In 1966, my husband got a better job as a butcher with the Hudson's Bay Co., and while I raised our six beautiful children at home, he worked at that profession for 35 years. One winter's evening at home, after Raymond had retired and after he'd suffered a stroke, I put on the fiddle music in the kitchen after supper and started dancing away, my apron flying. Our little dog barked and twirled in a circle and Raymond laughed. He said the dog must think I was crazy!

When Raymond died in September 2004, he was only 61 years old. Together, we now have 25 grandchildren – and they are all musical. I love the name of our son's band, The Remedies, because it explains what music does, and how it has enriched every decade of my life.

Extracts from these interviews will be appearing in the forthcoming book, *"The Cree Fiddlers of James Bay"* by Dr. Frances Wilkins

photo by Daniel Coyle

Deverick Ottereyes of the PEI Rocket

Cree Hockey News & Notes

by Daniel Coyle

Senior Hockey & Broomball

The 32nd Annual Cree Senior Hockey & Broomball Tournament kicks off on Thursday, December 6, at the Air Creebec Centre in Val-d'Or. One of the premier events on the Cree calendar, this year's tourney will feature action in seven categories, including Men's Class A Open Hockey, Class B1 Competitive Hockey, Class B2 Recreational Hockey, Oldtimers 40+ Hockey, Women's Hockey, Open Broomball and Recreational Broomball, with an anticipated 60 teams vying for prize money expected to be over $70,000.

Deadline for registering teams is Friday, November 30. For more information or to register a team, contact Freddy Schoeneich at Cree Regional Events & Entertainment at 819-825-2648.

NAHC Tryouts

The 12th Annual National Aboriginal Hockey Championships will take place from April 28 to May 4, 2013, in Kahnawake, Quebec. As the host team, Eastern Door & North are wasting no time making preparations to defend their 2012 Women's title. Tryouts for both the Men's and Women's squads are scheduled, and interested players at the double letter level, as well as accredited coaches, are invited to take part. Tryouts take place on Friday, December 28 and Saturday, December 29 at the Kahnawake Sports Complex. Registration fee is $50, payable before the first tryout ice session. For more information, contact Kenny Kane at the Kahnawake Sports Complex at 450-638-3311.

QMJHL

Young Cree hockey players continue to make an impact in the Quebec Major Junior Hockey league this season.

After failing to make the cut last season, Mistissini's Silas Neeposh has earned a regular job patrolling the blue line for the Chicoutimi Sagueneens. Neeposh, who spent time last season with the Midget AAA Kahnawake Condors and Temiscaming Titans, before winning bronze with Eastern Door & North at the 2012 NAHC, has been used largely in a stay-at-home role with the Sags. But he picked up the first goal of his QMJHL career on November 15 as the hometown Sagueneens pummelled the Victoriaville Tigers 7-2.

Waskaganish's Brett Hester has played a big role in the recent success of the Val-d'Or Foreurs. The club is 8-3-2 in their last 13 games, including a recent successful four game swing through the Maritimes, during which the club posted victories over Acadie-Bathurst, Moncton and PEI, before losing a close match to the #1 nationally ranked Halifax Mooseheads. Hester tallied a goal and an assist during the trip, including the winning goal over Moncton, to go along with 16 penalty minutes.

Hester currently sits among the league leaders in penalty minutes, including multiple fighting and instigator penalties, but that did not discourage sophomore PEI Rocket forward Deverick Ottereyes, a product of Chibougamau, from going toe-to-toe with Hester in a spirited fight when their two teams met on November 17. While Hester landed many of his early punches, it was a blow from Ottereyes that brought Hester to one knee before the two were broken up. Highlights of their battle have been captured by HockeyFights.com. Look for a link on the Nation's facebook page.

The soft-spoken Ottereyes, who likely opened some eyes with his performance against Hester, a formidable fighter, has otherwise been a steady third line presence for the Rocket. After a dismal season in 2011-2012, the Rocket have shown marked improvement this year, and currently sit second in their division behind Halifax.

Minor Hockey & Broomball Tourney

Part One of the 2012 Cree Minor Hockey & Broomball Tournament took place between November 1 and 4 at both the ACC in Val-d'Or and André Dubé Sports Centre in Senneterre.

In the Atom Hockey Competitive category, the Chisasibi Beavers defeated the Waskaganish Lil' Wings in the final, 7-6. In Atom Hockey Recreational, the Nemaska Axeman pounded Waswanipi 6-1, to take home the championship banner.

In the Novice Hockey Competitve final, Val-d'Or Agnico Eagles beat Waskaganish Lil' Renz 7-2, while the Val-d'Or Eagles easily beat the Oujé-Bougamou Lil' Cree Warriors 10-3 in the Novice Hockey Recreational final. Meanwhile, the Waswanipi Wolf Pack edged out Mistissini in the final of the Youth Girls' Hockey category by a score of 3-2.

The final of the Novice Broomball saw the Wemindji Lil' Wolverines win top honours by defeating the Waskaganish Angels by a score of 3-2.

"WHILE HESTER LANDED MANY OF HIS EARLY PUNCHES, IT WAS A BLOW FROM OTTEREYES THAT BROUGHT HESTER TO ONE KNEE BEFORE THE TWO WERE BROKEN UP."

Brett Hester of the Val d'Or Foreurs

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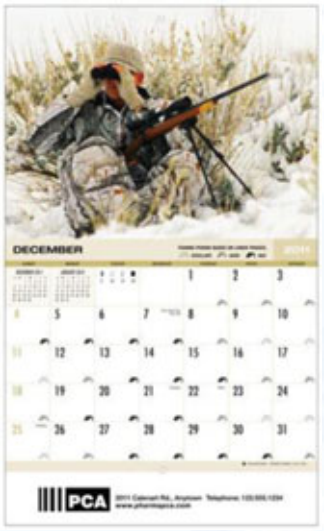

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by Lyle Stewart

Israeli PM Netanyahu's reelection strategy

Pillars of propaganda

Stop me if you've heard this one before... A people is herded off its ancestral lands onto tiny, overcrowded and often infertile wastelands by a newly arrived occupier. Their economy is squeezed and blockaded at every turn. Their culture and language mark them as somehow less than completely human. Their remaining lands are routinely stolen by religiously inspired "settlers." Their strongest leaders are assassinated and their most promising youth face indiscriminate kidnapping and long imprisonment without legal recourse. Every attempt to resist is met with overwhelming, technologically superior military force.

Of course, this history is familiar to the Indigenous peoples of North, Central and South America; it is the essential theme to the history of this hemisphere since the arrival of Columbus. But it's also the subject of current events, though one will rarely hear it described as such in any media coverage of the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

The good news, as I write, is of the ceasefire – brokered by the US and Egypt – between Israel and the militant Hamas movement that rules the tiny territory of Gaza and its desperately poor population of 1.5 million. The depressingly familiar bad news is that the origins of this conflict will continue to be washed away in a repetitive deluge of propaganda and rhetoric.

In fact, almost every aspect of this Israeli offensive is subject to Orwellian double-speak, right down to the name the Israel government chose for its military intervention: "Operation Pillar of Defense."

> "THE PALESTINIANS TRY THREE DIFFERENT APPROACHES, WEAPONS, DIPLOMACY AND NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE, AND ISRAEL SAYS NO TO ALL THREE."

Orwell taught us that the language of power turns truth on its head, beginning with the famous phrase, "War is peace." In this case, Israel's defense began with the missile assassination of the Hamas military chief in Gaza, incinerating him in his car on the main street of Gaza City. And this, knowing full well that the killing would prompt Hamas to retaliate with the relatively

feeble means at its disposal – launching a wave of notoriously inaccurate homemade rockets into Israel proper – which in turn justified the completely disproportionate Israeli air and missile attacks on the long-suffering people of Gaza.

And yet, you'd be hard pressed to see anyone characterize this as anything other than a defensive operation against Palestinian terrorism.

In the meantime, the official dehumanization of the Palestinian people proceeds. Israel's Interior Minister, Eli Yishai, was cheered by many when he insisted in the country's news media that, "The Israel Defense Forces has to expand the fighting, deepen it ... to destroy the water and electricity infrastructure, the roads, the transportation and communications, and send Gaza back to the Middle Ages." Hard to believe, but the government's transportation minister, Yisrael Katz, made Yishai sound like a moderate when he commented, "the tear of one Jewish child is too much, even if it means that all Gazans must be evacuated to the Sinai Desert."

And so it goes. Meanwhile, the desperation of people in Gaza will continue long after the missiles and rockets stop flying. Gaza has for decades been subject to a form of collective punishment. Because Israel enforces a land, sea and air blockade against Gaza, meagre food, medical and building supplies must

A pillar of Israel's 'defense'

be smuggled in at high cost. If nothing changes, the UN says the territory will be unlivable by 2020. According to the Israeli leaders quoted above, this is the publicly stated long-term goal.

This is not, it should be emphasized, a majority opinion of the Jewish population of Israel. Indeed, critical Jewish voices within Israel are far more insightful than anything we can hear or read in Canada or elsewhere around the world. As an editorial in the newspaper Haaretz observed, "Destroying Gaza's already meagre civil infrastructure isn't only inhuman and a war crime, it doesn't do Israel any good. Israel has tried it more than once. It has demolished roads and bridges, destroyed power stations and water supplies and turned the lives of Gaza's 1.5 million people into hell.

"As a result, Hamas has only grown stronger, the people's suffering has worsened and with it the hatred for Israel. Israel should seek the complete opposite: Gaza's prosperity."

But don't hold your breath. Enabling the religious radicals in Gaza helps Israeli hawks avoid dealing with Palestinian moderates who actually would recognize the Jewish state's right to exist in any negotiation to establish a lasting peace that can only be achieved by Palestinian statehood.

As the eloquent – and brave – Israeli writer Gideon Levy wrote in Haaretz recently, "The Palestinian people want to be

"THE TEAR OF ONE JEWISH CHILD IS TOO MUCH, EVEN IF IT MEANS THAT ALL GAZANS MUST BE EVACUATED TO THE SINAI DESERT."

free of the occupation. Life is like that sometimes. But how to accomplish that? At first they tried doing nothing. For 20 years they were idle, and indeed nothing happened. They then tried rocks and knives, the first intifada. And still nothing happened, except for the Oslo Accords, which did not change the fundamental nature of the occupation. After that, they tried a vicious intifada: again, nothing. They made a stab at diplomacy; still nothing, the occupation went on as before."

Now, Levy notes, the Palestinians are split, with the moderate Fatah government in the ever-shrinking West Bank, and the radical Islamists of Hamas running Gaza. "One hand fires Qassam rockets at Israel, the other turns to the United Nations. Israel crushes both of them. In between, the Palestinian people also try nonviolent protest, and are met with rifle butts to the face, rubber-tipped bullets and live fire. And again, nothing. The Palestinians try three different approaches, weapons, diplomacy and nonviolent resistance, and Israel says no to all three."

There are also much shorter-term considerations for the current Israel government, something few have commented on outside the country: the governing Likud party of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was facing a difficult campaign in national elections scheduled for January 22. Massive demonstrations in recent months against his right-wing economic policies have paralyzed cities like Tel Aviv.

Thus, creating a crisis and emerging as the heroic defender of the Jewish people – not so subtly casting himself as a "Pillar of Defense" – is a classic electoral strategy. Predictably and sadly, the investment in blood has paid off in political dividends for Netanyahu, who has seen his approval ratings jump in polls conducted during this conflict.

Our own government's unquestioning support of Netanyahu's aggression is par for the course. As we have chronicled here many times, Prime Minister Stephen Harper is engaged in his own long-term campaign to whittle away at and eventually eliminate the land base and distinct culture of First Nations in Canada, though, perhaps thankfully, without the air strikes and assassinations. But the result will eventually be the same. Once again, for those who refuse to forget, history guides current events.

UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

Boris la moufette moves into the cottage

by Xavier Kataquapit

I love my wilderness retreat. It is great to be out on the land in the far north surrounded by tall pine and situated on the side of a pristine esker lake. Much of my time is passed working away at renovations and, of course, watching the wildlife as they go about their daily chores.

Visitors come and go and I am very familiar now with the local mouse population that scrambles around in the walls, the squirrels and chipmunks that dart here and there all day long hard at gathering supplies for winter and the beavers that spend most of their time cleaning up after me by cutting away at felled trees. There are also the moose that call across the lake, the bears that leave tracks in the sand and the wolves that howl and sing at dusk.

We are careful being this remote in the wilderness but the local animals are not much of a threat. All this said I did not expect to have to deal with Boris.

The first sign of his presence was a scrambling and scratching sound under the old log cottage. That went on for a few days and I began to notice a smell in the air on the property. We realized that a skunk – or Sheekak in Cree – must have gone by and left his mark. Then, one evening as we were talking to a visiting neighbour, there he was out in full view sauntering past us. The plump, black little critter with the white stripe on his back was not at all concerned with our presence. The neighbour pointed out that he had come out from under the cottage.

Our neighbour Serge referred to the skunk in French by calling him a moufette. It occurred to us that the French word for this critter seemed much more kind than the English. Serge explained that this might be the moufette that he and his family referred to as "le chat d'Alain". As a joke they had decided that the wandering moufette was probably another neighbour's pet cat. We all got a laugh out of that.

On a more serious note we realized that somehow we had to evict this moufette from under the cottage. I began the eviction process by sealing up all the cracks, nooks and crannies that served as entry points for the moufette after watching his daily habits. That night somehow the little guy managed to get back under our chalet. He actually moved a concrete block.

It turned out he was nocturnal which meant he slept all day and then roamed at night. His comings and goings in the night awoke us and try as we might by stomping on the floorboards and banging pots and pans nothing bothered him. One night he returned in a big hurry perhaps with some other critter in chase. For some reason he resorted to spraying the side of the cottage and the smell awoke us immediately. It took our breath away and infuriated us.

In a rage I decided to fight fire with fire and I grabbed an almost full can of bear spray. I headed out into the night and sprayed all around the cottage and under the floorboards. There was no sign of the moufette as he had walked off in the dark. We went back into the cottage thinking we had won this war when suddenly we found we could not breath and we began to vomit. The bear spray had travelled up into the cottage's interior and that forced us to head back out into the chilly autumn night gagging and gasping for breath. There was no sign of the moufette and now we had a much more serious problem on our hands as we dealt with both his stink and the presence of a very strong chemical stench. We ended up spending the night in the truck. We were not happy.

At about six in the morning we made our way back into the cottage and started a roaring fire and although a terrible odour was still about we decided to try to get some sleep. Our sleep was uneasy to say the least and then about an hour after heading to bed we were wakened by a terrible sound of screeching from under the cottage. The moufette had come back home, disturbed the soil wet with bear spray and was suffering the affects of this terrible and debilitating chemical. However, the critter did not leave and chose instead to race around under the cottage in pain for about an hour. Finally, he seemed to recover and went to sleep as did we. The following day we found his doorway to the cottage and painted a sign with the name Boris on it.

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Missing Children's Network: They'll help you find kids who have run away or disappeared. 514-843-4333 (www.enfant-retourquebec.ca)

Drug Addiction help and reference: 1-800-265-2626 (www.drogue-aidereference.qc.ca)

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S.O.S. Conjugal Violence: 1-800-363-9010 (www.sosviolenceconjugale.com)

Health and Sexuality Resources Center: 1-888-855-7432 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) (www.criss.org)

Gay Helpline: 1-888-505-1010 (Monday to Friday, 8 am to 3 am and Saturday-Sunday, 11 am to 3 am)

The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal: 1-866-403-4688 (www.nwsm.info)

Suicide Action Québec: 1-866-277-3553 (www.suicide-quebec.net/)

Residential School Survivors: A 24 hour toll-free crisis line is available to provide immediate emotional assistance and can be reached 24-hours a day, seven days a week: 1-866-925-4419. Other support services and information for survivors is available on the AFN website at: www.afn.ca/residentialschools/resources

Concordia University, Montreal: The Centre for Native Education has changed its name to the Aboriginal Student Resource Centre (ASRC). The new name is inclusive of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis students the centre serves and recognizes its role as a resource for the Concordia community. For any further details contact: aboriginalcentre@concordia.ca or 514-848-2424 ext. 7327.

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